



The Competitive Carriers Association

Rural Cellular Association

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December 23, 2011

Via ECFS

The Honorable Robert M. McDowell
Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

**Re: WT Docket 06-150
WT Docket 11-18
RM-11592**

Dear Commissioner McDowell:

RCA urges the FCC to move quickly to initiate a rulemaking on interoperability, as it has promised in its Order approving the AT&T/Qualcomm transaction.¹ Even AT&T has agreed not to oppose interoperability in the lower 700 MHz spectrum if there are no interference concerns with Channel 51 and the E Block.² The record in the Qualcomm proceeding has confirmed that the interference concerns are myths.³ RCA is confident the forthcoming rulemaking will prove interoperability is both technically possible and desirable and, therefore, must be implemented before the end of 2012 if competitive carriers are to remain viable.

Since the Good Faith Purchaser Alliance requested action on this issue 27 months ago,⁴ AT&T and Verizon have launched LTE in approximately 200 markets. At the same time, competitive carriers, including many RCA members, and their significant investment in 700 MHz spectrum have been sidelined without access to devices to launch a 4G LTE network. Every day that goes by without interoperability, competitive carriers lose the ability to gain a foothold in the mobile market. If the FCC continues to forestall competition for 4G LTE services, this administration misses an opportunity to create jobs and heal the struggling economy, and consumers in rural and regional areas are left behind without access to the next generation technology. If the Chairman is serious about “ensuring a competitive mobile marketplace that drives innovation and investment,

¹ *In re* Application of AT&T Inc. and Qualcomm Incorporated For Consent To Assign Licenses and Authorizations, Order, WT Docket No. 11-18 (Dec. 22, 2011) [hereinafter AT&T/Qualcomm Order].

² Letter of Joan Marsh, Vice President – Federal Regulatory, AT&T, to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, FCC, filed in WT Docket No. 11-18 (Dec. 22, 2011) at 1.

³ Letter of Michele C. Farquhar, Counsel to Vulcan Wireless, Hogan Lovells, to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, FCC, filed in WT Docket No. 11-18, RM-11592 (Dec. 15, 2011); Letter of Michele C. Farquhar, Counsel to Vulcan Wireless, Hogan Lovells, to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, FCC, filed in WT Docket No. 11-18, RM-11592 (Dec. 14, 2011).

⁴ *In re* Petition for Rulemaking Regarding the Need for 700 MHz Mobile Equipment to be Capable of Operating on All Paired Commercial 700 MHz Frequency Blocks, *Petition For Rulemaking Regarding The Need For 700 MHz Mobile Equipment To Be Capable Of Operating On All Paired Commercial 700 MHz Frequency Blocks*, 700 MHz Block A Good Faith Purchasers Alliance, RM-11592 (Sept. 29, 2009).

creates jobs and benefits consumers,”⁵ the FCC must act expeditiously, as Commissioner Clyburn recommended,⁶ and immediately initiate a rulemaking to restore interoperability in the 700 MHz spectrum and finally unleash 12 MHz of low-band spectrum and billions of dollars of investments in next generation mobile broadband services.

Sincerely,

/s/

Rebecca Murphy Thompson
General Counsel

cc: Chairman Julius Genachowski
Commissioner Michael J. Copps
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Angela Giancarlo
Christine Kurth

⁵ Press Release, Federal Communications Commission, Statement from FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski Regarding AT&T Inc.’s Abandonment of Its Proposed Acquisition of T-Mobile USA Inc. (Dec. 19, 2011).

⁶ AT&T/Qualcomm Order at 43–44.